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# The Absence of the Cabbage Moth

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## The Absence of the Cabbage Moth · John Engman

I was invisible at age 12,  
severe and devoted to questions

about plant and animal kingdoms.  
I asked, nobody answered back,

I felt invisible because of this.  
Anything I was willing to ask

was an act: willing my becoming  
visible, simply *willing*. I walked

downstairs into illusions mother  
kept her silence about: how and what

death of the red cat, who and why  
and what gave the life to a white crocus.

If the perfect corpse of wax apples,  
pears and melons in a wooden bowl

couldn't hold her attention, who was  
I? I asked if this illusion meant

an imperfection in the world was false.  
She wouldn't say. It was her silence

that affected me like alcohol.  
Somehow I expressed myself: big white

soft shirt, rose gabardines, a hurt look.  
I asked, kept asking: *Who are we now?*

*Is this condition permanent? Is  
uncertainty like garden darkness*

*only a mirror to be pushed and  
pushed away without success? What good*

*news makes sense as it enters the world?  
What next? Is death or rain predicted*

*by the absence of the cabbage moth?  
Mother, please describe the cabbage moth*

*the red cat and white crocus in great  
detail, tell me all about myself.*